

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Sea of Japan and Fukuoka Flight Information Region (RJJJ)

North Korea maintains the capability to conduct unannounced ballistic missile test launches with little or no warning. Since 2015, North Korean missile test launches have increased in frequency and range, with missiles traveling beyond the boundaries of the Pyongyang FIR (ZKKP) on multiple occasions. Some of these ballistic missiles impacted in the Sea of Japan or traveled over Japan, impacting in the Pacific Ocean east of Japan within the Fukuoka FIR (RJJJ). These unannounced missile launches pose a potential safety hazard to U.S. civil aviation operating over the Sea of Japan and in the Fukuoka FIR (RJJJ). Note: The FAA currently prohibits U.S. civil aviation operations in the entire Pyongyang FIR (ZKKP) at all altitudes under Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 79 and KICZ NOTAM A0023/17.

The last unannounced ballistic missile launch took place on 28 November 2017. In 2017, North Korea conducted multiple unannounced ballistic missile test launches in support of its strategic weapons development program, to include testing new intercontinental and intermediate range missile systems. Of at least 18 ballistic missiles test launched during 2017, ten of the missiles flew into the Fukuoka FIR (RJJJ). Most of these launches resulted in the missiles impacting in the Sea of Japan. On 28 November 2017, North Korea conducted an unannounced launch of a single intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on a high lofted trajectory that impacted in the Sea of Japan within the Japanese Fukuoka (RJJJ) Flight Information Region (FIR). Two of the missile tests involved trajectories that overflowed Japan and impacted in the Pacific Ocean in the Fukuoka FIR (RJJJ) east of Japan. On 14 September 2017, North Korea launched a single intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) that overflowed portions of Hokkaido in the Japanese island chain and impacted the Pacific Ocean east of Japan. On 28 August 2017, North Korea launched an IRBM that overflowed portions of Hokkaido, impacting in the Pacific Ocean east of Japan, in the Fukuoka FIR, near the boundary with the Oakland Oceanic FIR (KZAK). North Korea also conducted an extensive number of unannounced ballistic missile launches during 2016 that impacted the Sea of Japan in the Fukuoka FIR (RJJJ). North Korea did not notify ICAO or publish a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) warning of any missile launches in 2016 or 2017.

North Korea could resume unannounced ballistic missile test launch operations during periods of heightened tension, combined military exercises, and/or significant North Korean national holidays.

U.S. operators are advised to use caution when planning to operate over the Sea of Japan and in the Fukuoka (RJJJ) FIR.

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